



GURU NANAK THE CELESTIAL LIGHT

550TH BIRTH ANNIVERSARY
BEIJING CELEBRATIONS

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INTRODUCTION



- Born on Kartik Poornima, 29th November, 1469 at Rai Bhoi Ki Talwandi (present day Nankana Sahab, Pakistan) near Lahore.
- Father Shri Kalyan Chand Das Bedi (Mehta Kalu in short) worked as Accountant (Patwari) for crop revenue in the village of Talwandi.
- Mother's name was Mata Tripta.
- One elder sister, Bebe Nanki who was 5 years old when he was born.
- Parents were both Hindu Khatri.

Birth



- Islamic invasions had continued spread of Islam in Northern India. Lodi dynasty was the ruling dynasty of the time. Guru Nanak also witnessed fall of Lodi clan and barbaric attacks of Babar laying the foundation of Mughal dynasty.
- Indian society was in a state of exploitation, confusion and darkness.
- Among Hindus, Vedic and Upanishadic values had diluted. Caste divide was rampantly practiced. Elite Brahmins / Pundits openly looted innocent farmers and laymen in the name of rituals and religion.
- Besides the exploitative rulers, there were three categories holding social power. **Pundits** who proclaimed to be guardians of Dharma and exploited people with their hypocrisy. **Qazis**, the Muslim judges, who were corrupt and decided court cases based on bribes given to them. **Jogis**, the distorted version of sanyasi Yogi, who looted innocent population in the name of tantra and mantra.
- Guru Nanak condemned all of them in addition to the ruling class and brought in a fresh air of spiritual enlightenment that freed people from bondage of bigotry, and introduced them to an integrated humanity having no discrimination based on religion, caste, gender or any other basis.

Social scenario



Guru Nanak defined God as follows :

- Ek Onkar : God is One
- Satnam : His name is the Truth
- Karta Purakh : He is the Creator
- Nirbhao : He has no fear
- Nirvair : He has no animosity/hatred
- Akal Murat : He is beyond the bondage of time
- Ajooni Saibhang : He is beyond birth & death ; self-existent
- Gur Prasad : Reached by Guru's blessings.

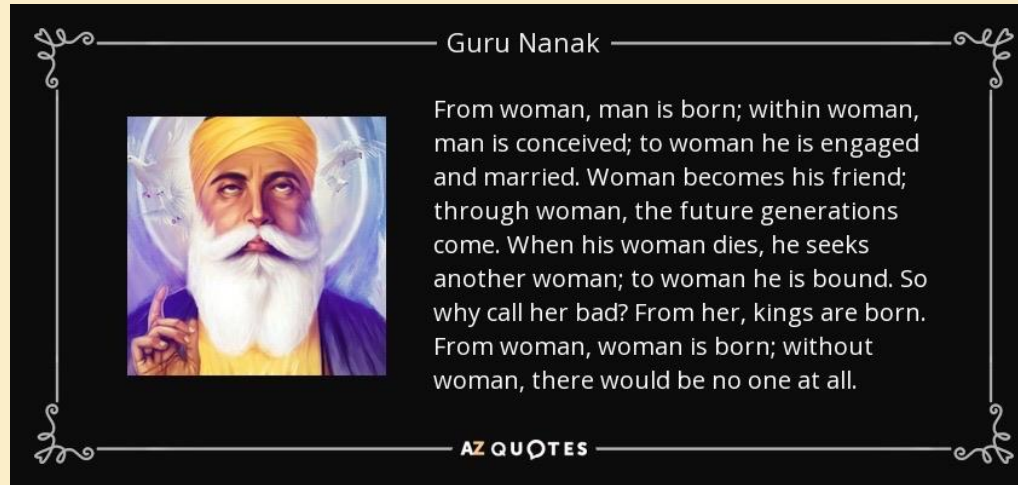
BASIC TENETS AND TEACHINGS





- Guru Nanak declared: Na Koi Hindu, Na Musalmaan. Nobody is a Hindu or Muslim. We are all humans.
- He taught: Bandyā toon Banda ban. O' human behave like a human being.
- He declared that this world that we see is all a reflection of God. He lives in his creation, this nature. He resides in all of us, and we need to realize Him; we'll not find him in jungles.
- He removed the confusion of Pravritti and Nivritti (worldly life and spiritual life) and declared that a householder can leave a pious and devoted life by performing his worldly duties honestly, his life dedicated to the Almighty by following simple principles : **Nam Japo**: Recite Lord's name all the time; **Kirt Karo**: Earn your living with honest work; **Wand Chhako**: Share your food with others – the needy.

Basic tenets and teachings



- He said all the four castes are one caste : Human.
- He did not differentiate between his men and women disciples and gave both of them an equal status. He said: *“So kyon manda aakhiye, jit jamme rajan”* Why consider woman as inferior when she gives birth to the Kings ?
- His approach with spirituality and life was logical and scientific. He questioned dogma and blind faith. Much before space explorers, he declared that there are many earths, skies and netherworlds in space. How can earth be shouldered by a white bullock? If so, how much weight will be on white bullock shouldering earth ?
- His knowledge and insight was much ahead of his time. He taught universal brotherhood, love, peace and emancipation of the soul through simple living.

Basic tenets and teachings

- Guru Nanak's contribution to India and world is invaluable and immeasurable .
- He was a bold protagonist of world peace declaring all humans as equal having no discrimination of caste, class, gender, race, religion or any other basis.
- He opened Dharamshals (Gurdwaras) open to everyone for food, shelter and sleep .
- His education reformed the society awakening common people releasing them from the yolk of ignorance and exploitation in the hands of their rulers, pundits, qazis, and jogis.
- He taught man to be directly in contact with the Almighty, without having need of any religious middlemen or brokers.
- He was a pioneer in spirituality who succeeded in teaching his disciples that they did not need to shun this world for attaining Moksha or ultimate sublime. They could achieve this goal by a simple, honest and pious living.

Contribution



Sikhism



- His disciples were called Sikhs (derived from the word Shishya). Sikhs started a new way of life praying to one God, making an honest living and helping fellow human beings without any discrimination whatsoever.
- At the time of his departure from the world, he ordained Sikhs to follow the Second Guru, Shri Angad Dev Ji. This chain kept going on till the tenth Guru Gobind Singh Ji who brought in the order of Khalsa for Sikhs and appointed the holy scripture, Guru Granth Sahab as the live Guru of Sikhs after his departure from this world.
- Over more than 500 Years, Guru Nanak's Sikhs have been spreading his message of universal brotherhood all over the world helping hungry, needy, homeless, war-ravaged, and restless that need food, shelter, love and spiritual enlightenment.

Sikhism



- Today, Gurdwaras are open for food and shelter to everyone at many places in India, UK, USA, Canada, Australia, Singapore and elsewhere. Sikhs serve food to the needy and homeless organizing Langars. Golden Temple alone feeds 100,000 people every day.
- Many voluntary organizations like Khalsa Aid send their volunteers to hotbeds of natural disasters and war zones for helping people with daily necessities of life, medical aid, emotional and mental comfort that only human love and brotherhood can provide.
- Millions of Sikhs representing Guru Nanak to spread love and brotherhood in this world and teaching spirituality through a simple and honest living are the biggest contribution of Guru Nanak to the world.

- Right since childhood, Guru Nanak raised fundamental questions about life and traditions. He refused to submit to blind faith and hypocrisy.
- At age seven, his father enrolled him at the village school as was the custom. Notable lore recounts that as a child Nanak astonished his teacher by describing the implicit symbolism of the first letter of the alphabet resembling the mathematical version of one, as denoting the unity or oneness of God - ੴ
- Other childhood accounts refer to strange and miraculous events about Nanak, such as one witnessed by Rai Bular, in which the sleeping child's head was shaded from the harsh sunlight, in one account, by the stationary shadow of a tree or, in another, by a venomous cobra.
- On 24 September 1487 Nanak married Mata Sulakkhani, daughter of Mūl Chand and Chando Rāṇī, in the town of Batala. The couple had two sons, Sri Chand (8 September 1494 – 13 January 1629) and Lakhmi Das (12 February 1497 – 9 April 1555).

Life journey and family



Udasis

In 1500, he embarked on his Divine Mission and went towards east, west, north and south and visited various centers of Hindus, Muslims, Buddhists, Jains, Sufis, Yogis and Sidhas. He met people of different religions, tribes, cultures and races. He travelled on foot with his Muslim companion named Bhai Mardana, a minstrel. His travels are called Udasis. He travelled within Punjab in 1499.



First Udasi

In his First Udasi (1500-1506), he travelled in Central and Eastern India going as far as Assam.



Second Udasi

- In his Second Udasi (1506-1513) he travelled to South India. Some scholars state that he visited Sri Lanka (Sinhala Dweep) too.



Third Udasi

In his Third Udasi (1514-1518), Guru Nanak traveled to the Gangetic plains, Bihar, Nepal,, Leh, (some scholars also state Lhasa and Tashkand) ,etc and then back to Punjab via the Kashmir valley.



Fourth Udasi

In his 4th Udasi
(1519-1521), he travelled
to Arab countries
including Mecca.



The Later Years

- He also travelled extensively in Punjab during 1523-24.
- From 1525-1539 , he lived a householder farmer's life in Kartarpur and departed for heavenly abode on 22nd September, 1539 at the age of 70 Years.



Successor

Guru Nanak appointed Bhai Lehna as the successor Guru, renaming him as Guru Angad, meaning "one's very own" or "part of you". Shortly after proclaiming Bhai Lehna as his successor, Guru Nanak died on 22 September 1539 in Kartarpur, at the age of 70.



ARDAS

*“NANAK NAM CHARHDI KALA
TERE BHANE SARBAT DA BHALA”*

*SAYS NANAK THAT GOD’S NAME IS THE RISING TIDE
AND HIS BLESSINGS DO GOOD (PEACE, PROSPERITY, SALVATION) TO ALL*

